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B. R. Ambedkar

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Bhimrao Ramji Ambedkar (Marathi:डॉ.भीमराव रामजी आंबेडकर) (April 14, 1891 — December 6, 1956), also known as *Babasaheb*, was an Indian nationalist, jurist, Dalit political leader and a Buddhist revivalist. He was also the chief architect of the Indian Constitution. Born into a poor Untouchable family, Ambedkar spent his whole life fighting against social discrimination, the system of *Chaturvarna* - the Hindu categorization of human society into four *varnas* - and the Indian caste system. He is also credited with having sparked the Dalit Buddhist movement. Ambedkar has been honoured with the Bharat Ratna, India's highest civilian award.

Overcoming numerous social and financial obstacles, Ambedkar became one of the first "untouchables" to obtain a college education in India. Eventually earning law degrees and multiple doctorates for his study and research in law, economics and political science from Columbia University and the London School of Economics, Ambedkar returned home a famous scholar and practiced law for a few years before publishing journals advocating political rights and social freedom for India's untouchables.

Contents

- 1 Early life
- 2 Pursuit of education
- 3 Fight against untouchability
- 4 Poona Pact
- 5 Political career
- 6 Architect of India's constitution
- 7 Conversion to Buddhism
- 8 Death
- 9 Ambedkar v. Gandhi on village life
- 10 Criticism and legacy
 - 10.1 Theorized Mahar bias by 'Untouchable' leaders
 - 10.2 Aftermath
- 11 Film
- 12 References
- 13 Further reading
- 14 External links

Dr. Bhimrao Ramji Ambedkar



B. R. Ambedkar

Alternate name(s):	Baba Saheb
Date of birth:	April 14, 1891
Place of birth:	Mhow, Central Provinces, India
Date of death:	December 6, 1956
Place of death:	Delhi, India
Movement:	Dalit Buddhist movement
Major organizations:	Independent Labour Party, Scheduled Castes Federation, Republican Party of India
Religion:	Buddhism

Early life



The young Ambedkar.

Bhimrao Ramji Ambedkar was born in the British-founded town and military cantonment of Mhow in the Central Provinces (now in Madhya Pradesh).^[1] He was the 14th and last child of Ramji Maloji Sakpal and Bhimabai Murbadkar.^[2] His family was of Marathi background from the town of Ambavade in the Ratnagiri district of modern-day Maharashtra. They belonged to the Hindu Mahar caste, who were treated as untouchables and subjected to intense socio-economic discrimination. Ambedkar's ancestors had for long been in the employment of the army of the British East India Company, and his father served in the Indian Army at the Mhow cantonment, rising to the rank of *Subedar*. He had received a degree of formal education in Marathi and English, and encouraged his children to learn and work hard at school.

Belonging to the Kabir Panth, Ramji Sakpal encouraged his children to read the Hindu classics. He used his position in the army to lobby for his children to study at the government school, as they faced resistance owing to their caste. Although able to attend school, Ambedkar and other Untouchable children were segregated and given no attention or assistance by the teachers. They were not allowed to sit inside the class. Even if they needed to drink water somebody from a higher caste would have to pour that water from a height as they were not allowed to touch either the water or the vessel that contained it. This task was usually performed for the young Ambedkar by the school peon, and if he could not be found Ambedkar went without water.^[2] Ramji Sakpal retired in 1894 and the family moved to Satara two years later. Shortly after their move, Ambedkar's mother died. The children were cared for by their paternal aunt, and lived in difficult circumstances. Only three sons — Balaram, Anandrao and Bhimrao — and two daughters — Manjula and Tulasa — of the Ambedkars would go on to survive them. Of his brothers and sisters, only Ambedkar succeeded in passing his examinations and graduating to a bigger school. His native village name was "Ambavade" in Ratnagiri District so he changed his name from "Sakpal" to "Ambedkar" with the recommendation and faith of Mahadev Ambedkar, a Deshastha Brahmin teacher who believed in him.^[1] (<http://hindutva.org/ambedkar.html>)

Ramji Sakpal remarried in 1898, and the family moved to Mumbai (then Bombay), where Ambedkar became the first untouchable student at the Government High School near Elphinstone Road.^[3] Although excelling in his studies, Ambedkar was increasingly disturbed by the segregation and discrimination that he faced. In 1907, he passed his matriculation examination and entered the University of Bombay, becoming one of the first persons of untouchable origin to enter a college in India. This success provoked celebrations in his community, and after a public ceremony he was presented with a biography of the Buddha by his teacher Krishnaji Arjun Keluskar also known as Dada Keluskar, a Maratha caste scholar. Ambedkar's marriage had been arranged the previous year as per Hindu custom, to Ramabai, a nine-year old girl from Dapoli.^[3] In 1908, he entered Elphinstone College and obtained a scholarship of twenty five rupees a month from the Gayakwad ruler of Baroda, Sahyaji Rao III for higher studies in the USA. By 1912, he obtained his degree in economics and political science, and prepared to take up employment with the Baroda state government. His wife gave birth to his first son, Yashwant, in the same year. Ambedkar had just moved his young family and started work, when he dashed back to Bombay to see his ailing father, who died on February 2, 1913.

Pursuit of education

A few months later, Ambedkar was selected by the Gayakwad ruler to travel to the United States and enroll at Columbia University, with a scholarship of \$11.5 per month. Arriving in New York City, Ambedkar was admitted to the graduate studies



B. R. Ambedkar, barrister

programme at the political science department. After a brief stay at the dormitory, he moved to a housing club run by Indian students and took up rooms with a Parsi friend, Naval Bhathena.^[4] In 1916, he was awarded a Ph.D. for a thesis which he eventually published in book form as *The Evolution of Provincial Finance in British India*. His first published work, however, was a paper titled *Castes in India: Their Mechanism, Genesis and Development*. Winning his degree and doctorate, he travelled to London and enrolled at Gray's Inn and the London School of Economics, studying law and preparing a doctoral thesis in economics. The expiration of his scholarship the following year forced him to temporarily abandon his studies and return to India amidst World War I.^[4]

Returning to work as military secretary for Baroda state, Ambedkar was distressed by the sudden reappearance of discrimination in his life, and left his job to work as a private tutor and accountant, even starting his own consultancy business that failed owing to his social status.^[5] With the help of an English acquaintance, the former Bombay Governor Lord Sydenham, he won a post as professor of political economy at the Sydenham College of Commerce and Economics in Mumbai. He was able to return to England in 1920 with the support of the Maharaja of Kolhapur, his Parsi friend and his own savings. By 1923 he completed a thesis on *The Problem of the Rupee*. He was awarded a D.Sc. by the University of London, and on finishing his law studies, he was simultaneously admitted to the British Bar as a barrister. On his way back to India, Ambedkar spent three months in Germany, where he conducted further studies in economics at the University of Bonn. He was formally awarded a Ph.D. by Columbia University on June 8, 1927.

Fight against untouchability

As a leading Indian scholar, Ambedkar had been invited to testify before the Southborough Committee, which was preparing the Government of India Act 1919. At this hearing, Ambedkar argued for creating separate electorates and reservations for Dalits and other religious communities. In 1920, he began the publication of the weekly *Mooknayak* (*Leader of the Silent*) in Bombay. Attaining popularity, Ambedkar used this journal to criticize orthodox Hindu politicians and a perceived reluctance of the Indian political community to fight caste discrimination. His speech at a Depressed Classes Conference in Kolhapur impressed the local state ruler Shahu IV, who shocked orthodox society by dining with Ambekdar . Ambedkar established a successful legal practise, and also organised the Bahishkrit Hitakarini Sabha

to promote education and socio-economic uplifting of the depressed classes. In 1926, he became a nominated member of the Bombay Legislative Council. By 1927 Dr. Ambedkar decided to launch active movements against untouchability. He began with public movements and marches to open up and share public drinking water resources, also he began a struggle for the right to enter Hindu temples. He led a *satyagraha* in Mahad to fight for the right of the untouchable community to draw water from the main water tank of the town.

On January 1, 1927 Ambedkar organised a ceremony at the Koregaon Victory Memorial, which commemorated the

Indian soldiers who had died in the Second Anglo-Maratha War, during the Battle of Koregaon. Here he inscribed the names of the soldiers from the Mahar community on a marble tablet. In 1927, he began his second journal, *Bahiskrit Bharat (Excluded India)*, later rechristened *Janata (The People)*. He was appointed to the Bombay Presidency Committee to work with the all-European Simon Commission in 1928. This commission had sparked great protests across India, and while its report was ignored by most Indians, Ambedkar himself wrote a separate set of recommendations for future constitutional reforms.

Poona Pact

By now Ambedkar had become one of the most prominent untouchable political figures of the time. He had grown increasingly critical of mainstream Indian political parties for their perceived lack of emphasis for the elimination of the caste system. Ambedkar criticized the Indian National Congress and its leader Mohandas (Mahatma) Gandhi, whom he accused of reducing the untouchable community to a figure of pathos. Ambedkar was also dissatisfied with the failures of British rule, and advocated a political identity for untouchables separate from both the Congress and the British. At a Depressed Classes Conference on August 8, 1930

Ambedkar outlined his political vision, insisting that the safety of the Depressed Classes hinged on their being independent of the Government and the Congress both:

We must shape our course ourselves and by ourselves... Political power cannot be a panacea for the ills of the Depressed Classes. Their salvation lies in their social elevation. They must cleanse their evil habits. They must improve their bad ways of living.... They must be educated.... There is a great necessity to disturb their pathetic contentment and to instill into them that divine discontent which is the spring of all elevation.^[2]

In this speech, Ambedkar criticized the Salt Satyagraha launched by Gandhi and the Congress. Ambedkar's criticisms and political work had made him very unpopular with orthodox Hindus, as well as with many Congress politicians who had earlier condemned untouchability and worked against discrimination across India. This was largely because these "liberal" politicians usually stopped short of advocating full equality for untouchables. Ambedkar's prominence and popular support amongst the untouchable community had increased, and he was invited to attend the Second Round Table Conference in London in 1931. Here he sparred verbally with Gandhi on the question of awarding separate electorates to untouchables.^[2] A fierce opponent of separate electorates on religious and sectarian lines, Gandhi feared that separate electorates for untouchables would divide Hindu society for future generations.

When the British agreed with Ambedkar and announced the awarding of separate electorates, Gandhi began a *fast-unto-death* while imprisoned in the Yeravada Central Jail of Pune in 1932. Exhorting orthodox Hindu society to eliminate discrimination and untouchability, Gandhi asked for the political and social unity of Hindus. Gandhi's fast provoked great public support across India, and orthodox Hindu leaders, Congress politicians and activists such as Madan Mohan Malaviya and Pawlankar Baloo organized joint meetings with Ambedkar and his supporters at Yeravada. Fearing a communal reprisal and killings of untouchables in the event of Gandhi's death, Ambedkar agreed under massive coercion from the supporters of Gandhi to drop the demand for separate electorates, and settled for a reservation of seats, which although in the end achieved more representation for the untouchables, resulted in the loss of separate electorates that was promised through the British Communal Award prior to Ambedkar's meeting with Gandhi which would end his fast. Ambedkar was later to criticise this fast of Gandhi's as a gimmick to deny political rights to the untouchables and increase the coercion he had faced to give up the demand for separate electorates.

See also: Poona Pact

Political career



Ambedkar delivering a speech to a rally at Yeola, Nasik on 13th October 1935.

In 1935, Ambedkar was appointed principal of the Government Law College, a position he held for two years. Settling in Bombay, Ambedkar oversaw the construction of a large house, and stocked his personal library with more than 50,000 books.^[6]

His wife Ramabai died after a long illness in the same year. It had been her long-standing wish to go on a pilgrimage to Pandharpur, but Ambedkar had refused to let her go, telling her that he would create a new Pandharpur for her instead of Hinduism's Pandharpur which treated them as untouchables. His own views and attitudes had hardened against orthodox Hindus, despite a significant increase in momentum across India for the fight against untouchability. and he began criticizing them even as he was criticized himself by large numbers of Hindu activists. Speaking at the Yeola Conversion Conference on October 13

near Nasik, Ambedkar announced his intention to convert to a different religion and exhorted his followers to leave Hinduism.^[6] He would repeat his message at numerous public meetings across India.

In 1936, Ambedkar founded the Independent Labour Party, which won 15 seats in the 1937 elections to the Central Legislative Assembly. He published his book *The Annihilation of Caste* in the same year, based on the thesis he had written in New York. Attaining immense popular success, Ambedkar's work strongly criticized Hindu religious leaders and the caste system in general. He protested the Congress decision to call the untouchable community *Harijans* (*Children of God*), a name coined by Gandhi.^[6]

Ambedkar served on the Defence Advisory Committee and the Viceroy's Executive Council as minister for labour.

Between 1941 and 1945, he published a large number of highly controversial books and pamphlets, including *Thoughts on Pakistan*, in which he criticized the Muslim League's demand for a separate Muslim state of Pakistan. With *What Congress and Gandhi Have Done to the Untouchables*, Ambedkar intensified his attacks on Gandhi and the Congress, charging them with hypocrisy.^[7] In his work *Who Were the Shudras?*, Ambedkar attempted to explain the formation of the Shudras i.e. the lowest caste in hierarchy of Hindu caste system. He also emphasised how Shudras are separate from Untouchables. Ambedkar oversaw the transformation of his political party into the All India Scheduled Castes Federation, although it performed poorly in the elections held in 1946 for the Constituent Assembly of India. In writing a sequel to *Who Were the Shudras?* in 1948, Ambedkar lambasted Hinduism in the *The Untouchables: A Thesis on the Origins of Untouchability*:

The Hindu Civilisation.... is a diabolical contrivance to suppress and enslave humanity. Its proper name would be infamy. What else can be said of a civilisation which has produced a mass of people... who are treated as an entity beyond human intercourse and whose mere touch is enough to cause pollution?

[7]

Ambedkar was also critical of Islam and its practices in South Asia. While justifying the Partition of India, he condemned the practice of child marriage in Muslim society, as well as the mistreatment of women. He said,

No words can adequately express the great and many evils of polygamy and concubinage, and especially as a source of misery to a Muslim woman. Take the caste system. Everybody infers that Islam must be free from slavery and caste.[While slavery existed], much of its support was derived from Islam and Islamic countries. While the prescriptions by the Prophet regarding the just and humane treatment of slaves contained in the Koran are praiseworthy, there is nothing whatever in Islam that lends support to the abolition of this curse. But if slavery has gone, caste among

Musalmans [Muslims] has remained.^[8]

He wrote that Muslim society is "even more full of social evils than Hindu Society is" and criticized Muslims for sugarcoating their sectarian caste system with euphemisms like "brotherhood". He also criticized the discrimination against the Arzal classes among Muslims who were regarded as "degraded", as well as the oppression of women in Muslim society through the oppressive *purdah* system. He alleged that while *Purdah* was also practiced by Hindus, only among Muslims was it sanctioned by religion. He criticized their fanaticism regarding Islam on the grounds that their literalist interpretations of Islamic doctrine made their society very rigid and impermeable to change. He further wrote that Indian Muslims have failed to reform their society unlike Muslims in other countries like Turkey.^[8]

In a "communal malaise", both groups [Hindus and Muslims] ignore the urgent claims of social justice.^[8]

While he was extremely critical of Muhammad Ali Jinnah and the communally divisive strategies of the Muslim League, he argued that Hindus and Muslims should segregate and the State of Pakistan be formed, as ethnic nationalism within the same country would only lead to more violence. He cited precedents in historical events such as the dissolution of the Ottoman Empire and Czechoslovakia to bolster his views regarding the Hindu-Muslim communal divide.^[8]

However, he questioned whether the need for Pakistan was sufficient and suggested that it might be possible to resolve Hindu-Muslim differences in a less drastic way. He wrote that Pakistan must "justify its existence" accordingly. Since other countries such as Canada have also had communal issues with the French and English and have lived together, it might not be impossible for Hindus and Muslims to live together.^[8]

He warned that the actual implementation of a two-state solution would be extremely problematic with massive population transfers and border disputes. This claim was prophetic, looking forward to the violent Partition of India after Independence.^[8]

Architect of India's constitution



The chairman of the constitution drafting committee — B. R. Ambedkar

Despite his increasing unpopularity, controversial views, and intense criticism of Gandhi and the Congress, Ambedkar was by reputation an exemplary jurist and scholar. Upon India's independence on August 15, 1947, the new Congress-led government invited Ambedkar to serve as the nation's first law minister, which he accepted. On August 29, Ambedkar was appointed chairman of the Constitution Drafting Committee, charged by the Assembly to write free India's new Constitution. Ambedkar won great praise from his colleagues and contemporary observers for his drafting work. In this

task Ambedkar's study of sangha

practice among early Buddhists and his extensive reading in Buddhist scriptures was to come to his aid. Sangha practice incorporated voting by ballot, rules of debate and precedence and the use of agendas, committees and proposals to conduct business. Sangha practice itself was modelled on the oligarchic system of governance followed by tribal republics of ancient India such as the Shakyas and the Lichchavis. Thus, although Ambedkar used Western models to give his Constitution shape, its spirit was Indian and, indeed, tribal.

The text prepared by Ambedkar provided constitutional guarantees and protections for a wide range of civil liberties for individual citizens, including freedom of religion, the abolition of untouchability and the outlawing of all forms of discrimination.^[7]

Ambedkar argued for extensive economic and social rights for women, and also won the Assembly's support for introducing a system of reservations of jobs in the civil services, schools and colleges for members of scheduled castes and scheduled tribes, a system akin to affirmative action. India's lawmakers hoped to eradicate the socio-economic inequalities and lack of opportunities for India's depressed classes through this measure, which had been originally envisioned as temporary on a need basis. The Constitution was adopted on November 26, 1949 by the Constituent Assembly. Speaking after the completion of his work, Ambedkar said:

I feel that the Constitution is workable; it is flexible and it is strong enough to hold the country together both in peace time and in war time. Indeed, if I may say so, if things go wrong under the new Constitution the reason will not be that we had a bad Constitution. What we will have to say is that Man was vile.^[7]

Ambedkar resigned from the cabinet in 1951 following the stalling in parliament of his draft of the Hindu Code Bill, which sought to expound gender equality in the laws of inheritance, marriage and the economy. Although supported by Prime Minister Nehru, the cabinet and many other Congress leaders, it received criticism from a large number of members of parliament. Ambedkar independently contested an election in 1952 to the lower house of parliament, the Lok Sabha but was defeated. He was appointed to the upper house of parliament, the Rajya Sabha in March 1952 and would remain a member until his death.

Conversion to Buddhism

In the 1950s, Ambedkar turned his attention to Buddhism and travelled to Sri Lanka (then Ceylon) to attend a convention of Buddhist scholars and monks. While dedicating a new Buddhist vihara near Pune, Ambedkar announced that he was writing a book on Buddhism, and that as soon as it was finished, he planned to make a formal conversion to Buddhism.^[9] Ambedkar twice visited Burma in 1954; the second time in order to attend the third conference of the World Fellowship of Buddhists in Rangoon. In 1955, he founded the Bharatiya Bauddha Mahasabha, or the Buddhist Society of India. He completed his final work, *The Buddha and His Dhamma*, in 1956. It was published posthumously.

Ambedkar organised a formal public ceremony for himself and his supporters in Nagpur on October 14, 1956. Accepting the Three Refuges and Five Precepts from a Buddhist monk in the traditional manner, Ambedkar completed his own conversion. He then proceeded to convert an estimated 500,000 of his supporters who were gathered around him.^[9] Taking the 22 Vows, Ambedkar and his supporters explicitly condemned and rejected Hinduism and Hindu philosophy. He then traveled to Kathmandu in Nepal to attend the Fourth World Buddhist Conference. He completed his final manuscript, *The Buddha or Karl Marx* on December 2, 1956.

He was unaware of the fact that the Buddha had Brahmin heritage. Lord Buddha is said to be a descendant of Sage Angirasa in many Buddhist texts.^[10]

There too were Kshatriyas of other clans to whom members descend from Angirasa, to fulfill a childless king's wish.^[11]

Also, "*One of Ambedkar's allies, Kisan Phagoji Bansod, who opposed his decision to convert in 1935, found him too obsessed with reclaiming culture and not sufficiently concerned with analyzing conditions of material oppression.*"

Death

Since 1948, Ambedkar had been suffering from diabetes. He was bed-ridden from June to October in 1954 owing to clinical depression and failing eyesight.^[9]

He had been increasingly embittered by political issues, which took a toll on his health. His health worsened as he furiously worked through 1955. Just three days after completing his final manuscript *The Buddha and His Dhamma*, it is said that Ambedkar died in his sleep on December 6, 1956 at his home in Delhi.

A Buddhist-style cremation was organised for him at Chowpatty beach on December 7, attended by hundreds of thousands of supporters, activists and admirers.

Ambedkar was survived by his second wife Savita Ambedkar, born as a caste Brahmin and converted to Buddhism with him. His wife's name before marriage was Sharda Kabir. Savita Ambedkar died as a Buddhist in 2002. Ambedkar's grandson, Prakash Yaswant Ambedkar leads the Bharipa Bahujan Mahasangha and has served in both houses of the Indian Parliament.

A number of unfinished typescripts and handwritten drafts were found among Ambedkar's notes and papers and gradually made available. Among these were *Waiting for a Visa*, which probably dates from 1935-36 and is an autobiographical work, and the *Untouchables, or the Children of India's Ghetto*, which refers to the census of 1951.^[9]

A memorial for Ambedkar was established in his Delhi house at 26 Alipur Road. His birthdate is celebrated as a public holiday known as Ambedkar Jayanti. He was posthumously awarded India's highest civilian honour, the Bharat Ratna in 1990. Many public institutions are named in his honour, such as the Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar Open University in Hyderabad, Andhra Pradesh, B. R. Ambedkar Bihar University, Muzaffarpur, the other being Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar International Airport in Nagpur, which was otherwise known as Sonagaon Airport. A large official portrait of Ambedkar is on display in the Indian Parliament building.

On the anniversary of his birth (14th April) and death (6th December) and on Dhamma Chakra Pravartan Din, 14th Oct at Nagpur, at least half a million people gather to pay homage to him at his memorial in Mumbai. Hundreds of bookshops are set up, and books are sold for millions of rupees. His message to his followers was " Educate!!!, Organize!!!, Agitate!!!".

Ambedkar v. Gandhi on village life

Ambedkar was a fierce critic of Mahatma Gandhi (and the Indian National Congress). He was criticized by his contemporaries and modern scholars for this opposition to Gandhi, who had been one of the first Indian leaders to call for the abolition of untouchability and discrimination.

Gandhi had a more positive, arguably romanticised view of traditional village life in India and a sentimental approach to the untouchables, calling them Harijan (children of God) and saying he was "of" them. Ambedkar rejected the epithet "Harijan" as condescending. He tended to encourage his followers to leave their home villages, move to the cities, and get an education.

Criticism and legacy

Ambedkar's legacy as a socio-political reformer, had a deep effect on modern India. In post-Independence India his socio-political thought has acquired respect across the political spectrum. His initiatives have influenced various spheres of life and transformed the way India today looks at socio-economic policies, education and affirmative action through socio-economic and legal incentives. His reputation as a scholar led to his appointment as free India's first law minister, and chairman of the committee responsible to draft a constitution. He passionately believed in the freedom of the individual and criticised equally both orthodox casteist Hindu society, as well as exclusivism and narrow doctrinaire positions in Islam. His polemical condemnation of Hinduism and attacks on Islam made him unpopular and

controversial, although his conversion to Buddhism sparked a revival in interest in Buddhist philosophy in India.

Ambedkar's political philosophy has given rise to a large number of Dalit political parties, publications and workers' unions that remain active across India, especially in Maharashtra. His promotion of the Dalit Buddhist movement has rejuvenated interest in Buddhist philosophy in many parts of India. Mass conversion ceremonies have been organized by Dalit activists in modern times, emulating Ambedkar's Nagpur ceremony of 1956.

Some scholars, including some from the affected castes, took the view that the British were more even-handed between castes, and that continuance of British rule would have helped to eradicate many evil practices. This political opinion was shared by quite a number of social activists including Jyotirao Phule.

Some, in modern India, question the continued institution of reservations initiated by Ambedkar as outdated and anti-meritocratic.

Theorized Mahar bias by 'Untouchable' leaders

Narayan Rao Kajrolkar critisized Ambedkar because he believed that he was biased to spend government on his own caste, the Mahar, rather than divide the funds equally among others such as the Chambar and the Mangs.^[12] Sitaram Narayan Shivtarkar critisised him on the same account at the Chambar conference held at Khond at the Ratnagiri District on 27 October, 1037.^[13]

At the "First Chambar Conference" at Ratnagiri on December 1937, chaired by S. G. Songaonkar, echoed this yet again.^[14]

Aftermath

Frequent violent clashes between Buddhist groups and orthodox Hindus have occurred over the years. When in 1994 a garland of shoes was hung around a statue of Ambedkar in Mumbai, sectarian violence and strikes paralyzed the city for over a week. When the following year similar disturbances occurred, a statue of Ambedkar was destroyed. Upper-caste groups in Tamil Nadu

have also engaged in violence against Buddhists. In addition, some Buddhists who converted to Buddhism have rioted against Hindus (such as the 2006 Dalit protests in Maharashtra) and desecrated Hindu temples, often incited into doing so by anti-Hindu elements and replacing deities with pictures of Ambedkar^[15]. The radical Ambedkarite "Buddhist Panthers Movement" has even gone so far as to attempt to assassinate academics who have been critical of Ambedkar's understanding of Buddhism.^[16]

Film

Jabbar Patel directed the Hindi-language movie *Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar* [2] (<http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0270321/>) about the life of Ambedkar, released in 2000, starring the Indian actor Mammooty as Ambedkar. Sponsored by India's National Film Development Corporation and the Ministry of Social Justice, the film was released after a long and controversial gestation period.

Dr. David Blundell, professor of anthropology at UCLA and Historical Ethnographer, has established [3] (<http://arising-light.org>)

a long-term project; a series of films and events that are intended to stimulate interest and knowledge about the social and welfare conditions in India. *Arising Light* is a film on the life on Dr B. R. Ambedkar and social welfare in India.

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- Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar and His People (<http://www.ambedkar.org/>)
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- Dr. Bhimrao Ambedkar in Columbia University (http://c250.columbia.edu/c250_celebrates/remarkable_columbians/bhimrao_ambedkar.html)
- Ambedkar's statue at Columbia University (<http://www.columbia.edu/cu/news/00/12/ambedkar.html>)
- University of Heidelberg (http://www.sai.uni-heidelberg.de/saireport/2003/pdf/1_ambedkar.pdf)
- "The Buddha and His Dhamma" with unpublished preface (http://www.columbia.edu/itc/mealac/pritchett/00ambedkar/ambedkar_buddha/)
- Article on Ambedkar's Neo-Buddhism by Edmund Weber* (<http://web.uni-frankfurt.de/irenik/relkultur18b.html>)
- Short Movie on Life of Dr.Babasaheb Ambedkar (<http://video.google.com/videoplay?docid=-2727847584094201457&hl=en>)
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